

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

1-26 (Cancelled)

27. (Currently Amended) A seal for use in a solid oxide fuel cell comprising a matrix of ceramic fibres and a plurality of solid particles impregnated within the matrix and interspersed between the ceramic fibres, wherein the fibres and solid particles are unsintered and wherein the fibres and particles combine to form a flexible and compressible seal which is substantially but not hermetically gas-tight, ~~and wherein the seal does not comprise a catalytic element.~~

28. (Previously Added) The seal of claim 27 wherein the fibres are randomly oriented.

29. (Previously Added) The seal of claim 27 wherein the seal is compressed prior to installation into a fuel cell stack.

30. (Previously Added) The seal of claim 27 wherein the solid particles comprise ceramic particles.

31. (Previously Added) The seal of claim 30 wherein some or all of the ceramic fibres comprise alumina, zirconia, titania, magnesia or silica.

32. (Previously Added) The seal of claim 31 wherein some or all of the ceramic particles comprise alumina, zirconia, titania, magnesia or silica.

33. (Previously Added) The seal of claim 27 wherein a substantial portion of the solid particles have a particle size less than about 1 micron.

34. (Previously Added) The seal of claim 33 wherein the solid particles comprises a first portion and a second portion wherein the average particle size of the first portion is larger than the average particle size of the second portion.

35. (Previously Added) The seal of claim 34 wherein the first portion has an average particle size of about 0.50 micron and the second portion has an average particle size of about 0.17 micron or less.

36. (Previously Added) The seal of claim 32 wherein the fibres comprise alumina and the particles comprise alumina or zirconia.

37 (New) A seal for use in a solid oxide fuel cell comprising a matrix of ceramic fibres and a plurality of solid particles impregnated within the matrix and interspersed between the ceramic fibres, wherein the fibres and solid particles are unsintered and wherein the fibres and particles combine to form a flexible and compressible seal which is substantially but not hermetically gas-tight, wherein a substantial portion of the particles have a particle size less than about 1 micron, and wherein the solid particles comprise a first portion and a second portion, wherein the average particle size of the first portion is larger than the average particle size of the second portion.

38. (New) The seal of claim 37 wherein the first portion has an average particle size of about 0.50 microns and the second portion has an average particle size of about 0.17 microns or less.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance and allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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